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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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SOURCE Domestic Production

1. Most of the production of agricultural machinery was concentrated in various Agrostroj enterprises. Agrostroj, National Enterprise, in Prostějov (N 49-28, E 17-07), the former Kovarik Firm, produced mainly: threshing machines and complete threshing sets including baling machines and straw conveyors; mechanized plows, marked Vibrax, for potato and sugar beet harvesting; tractors of one axle, called "gravels", for gardening and orchard purposes; and tractor-trailers.
2. The threshing machines were of two types: 35 and 45; the number probably designated the length of the threshing drum in inches. These machines were made entirely of metal and were the first of this kind to be produced in Czechoslovakia. Mass production of these threshing machines started in 1950. Formerly, the factory produced smaller threshing machines, types 24 and 28. However, their production was discontinued by the Communists because they were the types used by private farmers and the 35 and 45 types were produced instead. Type 35 and 45 threshing machines were almost fully automatic; only four men were needed to operate them. The electric driving motor was installed in the machine itself. Source did not know which factory produced the electric motor. These threshing machines were the largest produced in Czechoslovakia and were primarily designed for the state farms. However, they did not prove satisfactory because of their frequent break-downs and the power output developed was low. Their capacity might have been satisfactory for working on units of 50 or 70 hectares but they were too small to be used on the state farms. The consumption of electric current by these machines was high and the state farms would have preferred non-automatic threshing machines with a lower consumption of current; at times the supply of electric current to the state farms was cut off because of excessive consumption by the threshing machines. In 1953, Agrostroj Prostějov manufactured the prototype

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of a larger threshing machine with a drum length of about 55 inches. This type threshing machine was supposed to be for the exclusive use of state farms; however, mass production apparently was not far advanced because source did not see any of these threshing machines up to late summer 1954.

3. The Vibrax potato and sugar beet harvesting machine was the first of its type produced in Czechoslovakia. Mass production began in 1952. The machine was developed both for use by the state farms and for the tractor and machinery pools. Up to late summer 1954, however, source saw only a few of these machines. The particular advantage of this machine was the fact that the harvested potatoes fell in a neat line behind the machine and were not spread around as in the case of other type machines. Vibrax proved satisfactory only when operating on light soil and in rather flat country. The tractor and machinery pools blamed the poor material and design of the machine for the frequent defects which the machine developed. The factory, on the other hand, blamed the pools for poor handling of the machines.
4. Agrostroj in Prostějov manufactured the prototype of a combine for grain harvesting. In 1954, the prototype was tested at the state farm in Jenec (N 15-05, E 14-13), but source did not know the results of this test.
5. Agrostroj, National Enterprise, in Brandys nad Labem (N 50-11, E 14-40), the former Melichar Firm, produced sowing machines of all kinds. The machines were of an old design but were quite dependable.
6. Agrostroj, National Enterprise, in Roubnice nad Labem (N 50-25, E 14-15), the former Becher Firm, produced mainly plows and all types of soil cultivation implements, such as harrows, clod mashers, weeders, etc.
7. Agrostroj, National Enterprise, in Jicin (N 50-26, E 15-22), the former Knotek Firm, produced all kinds of machinery for the harvest of grain and grass, such as mowing machines and binders.
8. Agrostroj, National Enterprise, in Nove Dvory (N 49-58, E 15-20) produced flax pullers.
9. Agrostroj, National Enterprise, in Decin (N 50-47, E 14-13), the former Raussendorff Firm, produced straw and hay baling machines of various types. This factory had many years of experience in this field.
10. A factory in Posterna (N 48-45, E 16-52) produced rubber conveyor belts used both in construction firms and in sugar factories. The factory was the former Gallus Brothers Firm which produced threshing machines. Source did not know the present name of the factory; however, it was not Agrostroj. Threshing machines were no longer produced here.
11. Transporta, National Enterprise, in Chrudim (N 49-51, E 15-48) was the main plant for the production of conveyors used in stables. These conveyors were also produced by various community enterprises. It was source's opinion that the production of this item was not well organized since its production had not been assigned to a specific factory as in the case of other agricultural items.
12. Zbrojovka, National Enterprise, in Brno started production of tractors in 1946. The first type produced was the Zetor 25 which developed 25 hp. Starting in 1948, the Zetor 15 for 15 hp. was also produced. Not many units of the Zetor 15 were produced because the tractor was too small for socialistic agriculture. In 1952, Zbrojovka started

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production of a new type, Zetor 25K, with 25 hp. This tractor was higher than the Zetor 25 and was better suited for cultivation purposes. While the 25 and 15 types were destined for the state farms and tractor and machinery pools -- from one-third to one-half of the total number of tractors at the pools were Zetor 15s and 25s -- the 25K type was exported. Source did not see any of this type operating in Czechoslovakia. In 1950, Zbrojevka manufactured the Zetor 35 type. Its mass production was supposed to begin in 1954.

13. From about 1946 onward, the V.I. Lenin Works in Pilsen produced the Skoda 30 type which developed 30 hp. In 1951, its production was discontinued.
14. CKD in Prague, probably Prague-Liben, produced a type developing 35 hp. This was a caterpillar tractor while all of the remaining Czechoslovak tractors were wheel tractors. Source heard that the caterpillars broke down easily, but he did not believe too many of these were produced since he saw only one.
15. The former Svoboda Firm, source did not know the firm's present name, in Mlada Boleslav (N 50-25, E 14-54) produced two types of tractors, one which developed 15 hp. and another which developed 22 hp. However, this production was discontinued in 1947 or 1948. Before the war the Svoboda Firm also produced tractors of two types, 15 hp. and 12 hp.
16. Before the war, the Pujmann Firm in Nove Ransko near Chotebor (N 49-43, E 15-40) also produced a 12 hp. tractor. This production was not resumed after the war and source does not know the present name of the firm.

#### Equipment of Foreign Manufacture

17. In addition to domestic products, foreign-made tractors were also in operation in Czechoslovakia. The Soviet KD 54, a caterpillar tractor, was at the state farms and the tractor and machinery pools as well. However, there were fewer KD 54 tractors than Skodas at the pools. The Soviet Stalinec 80 was used in construction work but there were not as many of these as the KD 54. German tractors dating from the war were operated on the state farms. The most common was the Bulldog; not so common were: Lanz, Deutz, Normag, and Fahr. American tractors made available from UNRRA funds were also in operation at the state farms. They bore the trademarks John Deere, Farmall, Ferguson, and McCormick. The tractor and machinery pools did not have German or American tractors; these tractors were owned by the state farms from the beginning or they were owned by large estates which became the property of the state farms after the Communists took over. Tractors produced before World War II, either of Czechoslovak or foreign origin, were no longer used in Czechoslovakia. Practically all of them ceased to operate shortly after they had been "purchased" by the tractor and machinery pools from private farmers. The pools "purchased" all tractors owned by private farmers, even the very small ones which could not be used by the pools. This procedure complied with the policy of the regime which aimed to ruin private concerns. The tractors were old and required much care which was not given them at the pools. Consequently, the tractors were ruined in a very short time.

#### Allocation of Machinery

18. About 90 per cent of the machinery which had been "purchased" by tractor and machinery pools from private farmers was not serviceable. Thus, the pools operated with new machinery only. However, the pools

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were not sufficiently equipped with machinery. Source believed the pools had just about enough tractors and plows to cultivate the amount of land owned by the Unified Agricultural Cooperatives in 1953, which was about 38% of the total agricultural land in Czechoslovakia. But the pools did not have enough tractors and plows to cultivate the land owned by private farmers as well. The pools also worked for some private farmers but were capable of doing this only because they did not work on all the cooperative land. The cooperatives, in turn, could not afford to have the pools cultivate all of the land. The pools lacked an even greater number of machines other than tractors and plows, such as harvest equipment. The state farms had, source believed, a sufficient number of tractors but were lacking other kinds of machinery; nevertheless, they were better equipped than the pools.

19. The state farms needed large threshing machines and they tried to make up for a lack of them by repairing old machines, even as old as the Hoffer-Schranz model which dated back to about 1895. The cost of repair was, of course, quite high because there were no available spare parts for old threshing machines and all of the spare parts had to be manufactured individually. The repair was performed in the Main Repair Plant of the Czechoslovak State Farms located in Letovice (N 49-33, E 16-35). Source believed this particular plant served the state farms located in Moravia only, although he personally did not know of any other Main Repair Plant for state farms. Source thought, however, that each large farm unit of the state farms normally had a repair plant for agricultural machines. In some instances a repair plant served two large farms. These plants performed minor repairs only, repairing mostly tractors. Source visited the Letovice plant in March 1953. The plant was located approximately in the center of the community on the west side of the highway leading from Brno to Svitavy (N 48-45, E 16-28). He believed it was formerly a machinery works which was rebuilt in about 1950 for the use of the state farms. The plant consisted of a foundry and a repair shop which were both old, and a new assembly shop which was built by the state farms. All of the machine tools

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machines undergoing repair in the assembly shop. These five machines occupied all of the space in the shop.

20. The tractor and machinery pools in southern Slovakia, southern Moravia, in the Rakovník (N 50-06, E 13-45) and in the Kolín (N 50-02, E 15-12) areas, also operated grain harvest combines. They were Soviet-made combines of two types: Stalínek 4, equipped with a petroleum driven engine, and Stalínek 6, which did not have a driving engine installed but was drawn by a tractor. The combines developed defects frequently and spare parts were difficult to obtain. The practicability of using combines in Czechoslovakia was debatable because they caused high losses of chaff and straw, especially in humid areas. All data pertaining to machinery on both state farms and tractor and machinery pools were classified "secret".

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